

Customer Spotlight

New charter school faces a pandemic and learning challenges to knock student math proficiency out of the park

B.E.S.T. ACADEMY SEES TREMENDOUS GAINS AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

San Diego, Orange, Riverside and Imperial, California

James Mays, co-founder of Brookfield Engineering Science and Technology (B.E.S.T. Academy), designed the independent-study charter school with one goal in mind: provide an excellent education to underserved populations that tend to languish in the traditional education systems. His goal was to help students learn, no matter their background or current knowledge.



School District

Race/Ethnicity

White	58
Black	38
Hispanic or Latino	75
Asian	8
American Indian	2
Native Hawaiian	6
Two or more races	19

Gender

Male	174
Female	31

District Serves

Grades 3 – 12 in San Diego, Riverside, Orange and Imperial counties Independent-study charter school

English Language Learners 85%

School Lunch Subsidized 85%

About Brookfield Engineering Science and Technology (B.E.S.T.) Academy

B.E.S.T. Academy and independent-study charter school boasts a personalized environment, filled with a variety of support and engaging programs. Individualized programs meet the needs of students, helping them prepare a four-year college or career pathways, with personalized guidance and support.

Mays spent his early career as a school counselor, and later, ventured into sales and followed that path for the ensuing 20 years, including a few years as a DreamBox representative in California.

Finally, Mays was ready to start the charter school. Mays, along with his co-founder and longtime friend, a principal, launched the school in 2019. But he didn't leave DreamBox behind. With his extensive knowledge of adaptive learning, he brought DreamBox Learning Math to the tuition-free public charter school. The school serves 3rd – 12th grade students in San Diego, Orange, Riverside and Imperial counties in California. DreamBox offers lessons in Spanish and English and that is especially important given the high Spanish-speaking population in Southern California. Its value became even more relevant during a pandemic.

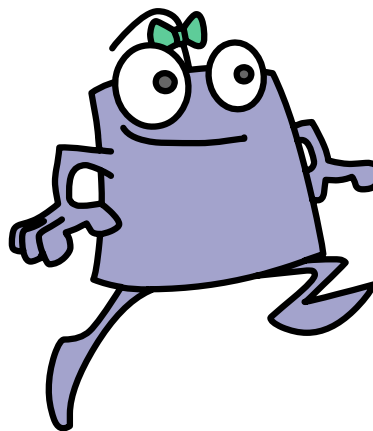
“Our students don't make a connection with a traditional brick-and-mortar schedule. We have about 85% English language learners and about 85% of students who get free and reduced lunch,” says Mayer describing the challenges his students face. “I have a number of students who have a parent that has been deported so they're dealing with family issues, and some students haven't had consistency in their education, like they missed a semester.”

Starting school under the best of circumstances is a challenge. With COVID, challenge took on new meaning.

Student growth is the foundation of B.E.S.T. Academy. However, the effects of the pandemic and quarantined students left teachers concerned about possibly losing academic ground with them.


When Mays introduced DreamBox as a supplemental and intervention tool, “My staff was like, ‘Let’s give it a try and see how it works,’ and they were all impressed with it right from the very beginning,” says Mays.

Having been a DreamBox representative, Mays used his own knowledge of the product along with the excellent DreamBox professional development courses to get teachers up to speed. Now, his teachers are all sold on DreamBox. Once teachers discovered the Insight Dashboard and the rich insights within it, they realized the data contained a goldmine. Reports give teachers deep student insights and the tools to personalize lessons and fill learning gaps. Teachers can see which students struggle and which excel. The information from the reports helps them create lessons using the Assignments feature that encompass all students at their individual learning levels.



“My staff was like, ‘Let’s give it a try and see how it works,’ and they were all impressed with it right from the very beginning.”

– James Mays | Co-founder | Brookfield Engineering Science and Technology


 **BEST Academy Charter School**
April 19 · 🌐

Happy Monday! We are kicking off this week with a special congratulations to BEST Academy 7th grader, Naomi for winning week 2 in the #DreamBoxLearning Math Challenge!

Naomi will receive a DreamPack bag filled with goodies and is in the running for the Grand Prize Drawing at the end of the challenge! 🎉

We are proud of your commitment to academics and learning! 📖

#math #mathematics #positivemindset
#engineering #science #technology #empoweringyouth #stempower
#studentsuccess
#steameducation #onlinelearning #mathisfun #virtuallearning #studentlife
#motivation #students #edstandards #charterschools
#californiacharterschool #publicschool #remoteteaching #learningthroughfun
#DreamBoxLearning #SpringMathChallenge #PursueYourPassionNow
#BESTAcademyCS

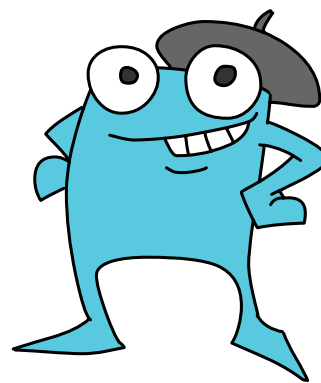


Mays knows that consistent use of DreamBox drives student growth. DreamBox aligns nicely with the school’s priority of helping students learn, no matter their background or current knowledge. **Within 6 months, “Our 7th graders grew 3 points, which is the annual growth rate,” says Mays. “Our eighth graders actually grew 4 points, and the projection was supposed to be 2.7.”**

How does B.E.S.T. sustain that kind of enthusiasm? Mays explains that school culture is growth-minded, and he looks for ways to engage students with a competitive edge. “I give monthly rewards and recognize our DreamBox top gainers on our social media,” explains Mays. “I make [their success public] so our students and families are going to our social media to see if their students made it.” B.E.S.T. students participate in the DreamBox national math challenge, a fun bi-annual program to drive student engagement and excitement.

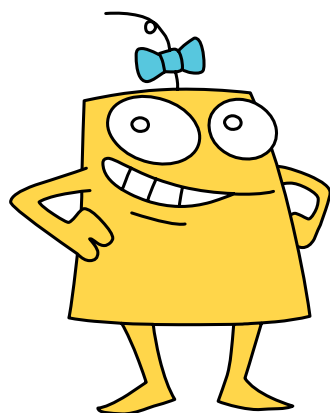
Parent involvement is especially important for an independent-study school. Students must attend a virtual homeroom and interact with their teachers and other students. The school includes fun activities such as hat day, show your pet day, and encourage online social interaction so students feel like part of a group. Once the pandemic is over, students will have the chance to join in-person programs, such as the drone club. “Our next step is that we want to have these clubs so kids can start socializing and supporting one another as well,” says Mays.

But for now, students and parents have adjusted to getting to know each other through the computer. “The school has 350 students; when I have a parent meeting, over 150 to 200 parents show up for the meeting,” says Mays.



“Sometimes I have to tell kids that they have to get off of it and do other subjects.”

– James Mays | Co-founder | Brookfield Engineering Science and Technology



Having parents on board has helped keep kids engaged and progressing. Kids are so interested in the DreamBox lessons that, “Sometimes I have to tell kids that they have to get off of it and do other subjects,” says Mays. High parent interest and engagement shows Mays that parents understand the importance of supporting their kids, and he makes sure they are looped into communication about students and courses regularly. Teachers send weekly emails telling parents how many lessons the children complete and all the programs they work with, including DreamBox, so the parents know where their kids stand.

As the school year winds down, Mays looks forward to DreamBox being an integral part of summer school extended learning program. As the pandemic begins to recede, and normalcy returns, Mays sees a good future using DreamBox and is eager to learn how students will perform under more normal conditions.



Read more customer spotlights at
DreamBox.com/Customer-Spotlights

